

LEVITICUS 11:1-23 (DIETARY LAWS, PART I)

From a health standpoint, the dietary laws of Israel are argued to make a great deal of sense. Apparently studies have shown that those animals that are allowed under the Law of Moses are good for you. This is what they claim, anyway.

However, the way that the Jews and even many aberrant Christian sects seem to treat the foods not allowed under the law, you would think that the rest of the world should be keeling over at simply smelling the aromatic waft of bacon, or by having something odd for dinner like horse meat.

But that isn't the case at all. From time to time, you will see a person over 100 years old who is being interviewed about their longevity. More often than not, they say something like, "I eat five pieces of bacon every morning and a pork chop every night." Despite being quite an enviable thing in and of itself, it shows that the arguments by these people about the food allowed and prohibited under the law being a health and longevity issue is simply not correct.

And yet, the Lord prescribed these things specifically for His people here in Leviticus. And, they will be repeated again in Deuteronomy. If these things don't add length to life, or cut life short under normal circumstances, then there must be a deeper meaning behind what is presented. Wouldn't you think?

Again, if you look at the Gentile world who have never even heard of the Law of Moses, you will see that folks in any given society live normal lives, about the same length as those who strictly abide by these dietary laws. In fact, the island my wife comes from has more centenarians come from it than any spot on earth. What seems to be the only difference is that those not under the law have a lot more fun stuff to eat than those under the law.

Text Verse: “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2

Timothy 3:14, 15

Another point to consider is that these laws cannot make a person clean or unclean in and of themselves. Only the fact that they are a part of the law can they actually make a person unclean. How do we know this? Well, one thing which the people of Israel could not eat was anything which had died by itself.

In verse 40, a verse which will not get to today, but which is relevant to the topic, it says that if someone eats of such a dead animal’s carcass, they are to wash their clothes and they would remain in a state of defilement until evening. This shows, quite clearly, that it is violating the law itself, and not the eating of the dead thing, which causes someone to be defiled.

If it was the eating of the thing which defiled the person, they would continue to be defiled after sundown. And more to the point, washing one’s clothes is an external act. It has nothing to do with what went into the person’s mouth.

And even more, if we really want to know if a person is defiled by certain foods, all we need to do is go to the New Testament and see what happens to a person who simply believes in Christ by faith. What is it that happens? They receive the Holy Spirit. The first such record of this was in Acts 10 at the house of a man named Cornelius. He believed, he received, and his tummy was full of whatever unclean foods he had eaten. God made no distinction between him and any believing Jew.

Why is this important? First, it tells us that these dietary laws have a

meaning which is not obvious on the surface. Their meaning has to be drawn out from the text. Secondly, it is important because if you really like bacon, or lobster, or clams, or bacon, or pork chops, or bacon you are free to eat any and all of them without fear of upsetting the Lord. Because of Christ, He has accepted you. It's a truth which is to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Clean and Unclean Quadrupeds (verses 1-8)

¹Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them,

The last section which began with the Lord making an address was in verse 10:8, where He spoke directly to Aaron. That was a unique occurrence in the Bible. Now another rare occurrence arises here. This is the first recorded time in the book of Leviticus that the Lord speaks to both Moses and Aaron. The last time they were both addressed in this manner was at the institution of the Passover in Exodus 12:1. That was while they were still in bondage in the Land of Egypt. Here, the address is made to both of them again.

This addressing of both of them will occur a few more times in Leviticus, but mostly it will be to Moses alone. As Aaron is now fully ordained as the high priest, the address is being made to both – Moses as the chief law-giver, and Aaron as the high priest who will mediate the law and carry out the enforcement of it.

Along with circumcision and the Sabbath, what will be given in the following verses has especially marked the people of Israel for 3500 years.

Disobedience to the law is normally the order of the day for them as a people, but circumcision, Sabbath keeping, and dietary laws are adhered to by a large percent of those who claim to be Jews, even to this day.

²“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, ‘These *are* the animals which you may eat among all the animals that *are* on the earth:

The translation here is not good. Two different words are used in this verse – *khayah* and *behemah*. The ESV does a much better job of showing us the distinction –

“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth.”

The *khayah*, or “living things,” describes all categories of life. It is then broken down into sub-categories. The implication, already noticeable, is that only living things are considered acceptable. Those things which have died, meaning the corpses of animals, are then excluded. This will be seen and explained later, but the term “living things” given now makes this obvious. There will be four categories of living things, just as there were in the creation account in Genesis 1:26 -

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

These same four categories, the living things on the land, those in the water, the birds of the air, and the swarming animals, will all be divided into that which is clean, and that which is unclean. Having noted this, it is

obvious that in the beginning all animals were declared good. There was nothing impure in them as the early Genesis account openly declared. Further, many of the animals which are forbidden are perfectly fine to eat. In fact, in Genesis 9, no dietary law was given for any living thing on earth –

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. ²And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. ³Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.” Genesis 9:1-3

For the Gentiles of the world, these restrictions did not apply, nor do they apply now. They are a set of instructions given solely to Israel, and only during the time that the covenant remained in existence. It is a covenant which is annulled in Christ, and which no longer applies. This is made explicit numerous times in the New Testament, but 1 Timothy 4:4, 5 is enough to demonstrate this -

“For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”

Paul notes “every creature of God.” It is a term which is set in direct contrast to the words of Leviticus 11, demonstrating perfectly that what is stated in this chapter was a temporary institution until the coming of Christ. Even Christ Jesus Himself said that there is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him. It clearly shows that these ceremonial laws were given for a set reason and for a specific period of time.

This should be simple and uncomplicated to understand, but unfortunately

it is beyond the grasp of countless people because they simply refuse to pick up the Bible and read it. Denominations all over the place reinsert these dietary laws, in part or in whole, into their *supposed* New Testament theology, and they quickly depart from the word of God in doing so. From this stepping stone, every sort of legalism one can possibly dream up becomes a standard part of their daily religious lives.

³ Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves *and* chewing the cud—that you may eat.

The first category to be considered are the *behemah*, or “beasts.” Specifically, quadrupeds. Of them, the verse gives very specific details, using several new words which are now brought into the Bible. Three of them – *paras*, *shasa*, and *shesa* – are directed to the cloven nature of the hooves, specifying that they be divided.

These words basically repeat the same thought to ensure that the matter is perfectly understood. It would be like saying, “Whatever splits the hooves, having split hooves.” It isn’t enough to say “splits the hooves,” because some animals do this, but they don’t have fully split hooves. They are to split the hooves so that the hooves are completely split.

The fourth new word is *gerah*, or cud. It is a process of up-chucking food from the first of several stomachs where it is chewed a second time before passing into the second stomach. The idea behind this process is that the maximum amount of nutrition is obtained from the food. It is also necessary because the foods these animals eat are difficult to digest, and so the extra process makes it much easier for them.

The requirements given here do not assign reasons as to why such animals are acceptable for food. They are merely distinguishing marks of what is considered acceptable. And so, this verse gives the specifics of what is authorized. When we get to Deuteronomy, the list of acceptable animals will actually be named –

“These *are* the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, ⁵ the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep.” Deuteronomy 14:4, 5

It is supposed by some that the meat of these animals is better for people for a variety of reasons, but that doesn't really explain why God specifies this. One can say, “Oh, of course it is because the Lord wants His people to be healthy, and this is how it will come about.” But that really doesn't explain anything. In fact, it would simply muddy the theological waters, wouldn't it! If that were true, then it would imply that He didn't really care about this in anyone from the time after the flood until the giving of the law. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Israel, the twelve sons of Israel, and etc. were not under these requirements. It would also then imply that He doesn't care as much about us now. We have no such dietary restrictions. Don't we count?

Can we assume that the Lord didn't care about the health of those both before and after the time of the law? Of course not! And so there must be another reason for specifying this. It must be giving us a picture.

How is the Lord transmitting these instructions to His people? It is through His word. And what is it that we are to do with the word of God? Rightly divide it, using it to discern between good and evil. Thus the fully divided hooves give us this picture. And the chewing of the cud gives us another picture. We are not to simply eat, swallow, and forget. Instead we are to call

the word back to mind and chew on it, contemplate it, and get every ounce of nourishment that we can out of it. This is especially so because this food is hard to digest, and it must be chewed and re-chewed.

A cow spends about eight hours of every day chewing the cud. This, plus their normal chewing of food totals approximately 40,000 jaw movements a day. Oh how good it would be if all of God's people spent as much time and effort chewing on His superior word, rightly dividing it, and applying it to their lives in a manner which would fully nourish their spirits. Paul, writing to Timothy, gave him words to consider which reflect what is implicitly taught here in Leviticus -

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing** the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15 (cloven hooves)

“**Consider what I say**, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.” 2 Timothy 2:7 (chewing the cud).

⁴ Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you;

The first animal to be singled out as unacceptable is *ha'gamal* or “the camel.” *Gamal* comes from a word which means to either wean, ripen, or deal with fully or adequately – such as in rewarding or repaying. The camel, though it chews the cud, doesn't have cloven hooves. It then is a picture of one who takes in God's word and absorbs it, getting out of it everything he can, but he doesn't rightly divide it.

Many atheists know the word better than most Christians, but they cannot discern the good from the evil, despite their time in the word. The same is true with those in cults, or those whose sole aim is to profit off of the word of God. They may know the Bible in a magnificent way, and it is fully ripened in their minds, but they divide it according to their desires, and not according to what is proper. They are camels who hold their heads high, and are proud and haughty concerning their humped-up riches, but in the end they will be fully and adequately repaid in a most unhappy way.

⁵ the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you;

Ha'shapan, or “the rock hyrax,” comes from the word *saphan*, or treasure. That word is used only once, in Deuteronomy 33 -

“They shall call the peoples to the mountain;
There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness;
For they shall partake of the abundance of the seas
And of **treasures** hidden in the sand.” Deuteronomy 33:19

These are timid animals that can be seen in Israel even today. They are small and resemble guinea pigs. Their closest relatives are actually elephants and sea cows. In reality, they don't even chew the cud, but their mouths resemble this, and so the terminology used is not scientific, but rather popular. Just as the Bible says the sun rises, even though it doesn't actually rise, these animals are said to chew the cud even though they don't really.

This animal then pictures a person who merely pretends to dine on the word, but doesn't. And what little they do know, they do not rightly divide.

They take the treasure of God, and simply hide it in the sand, just as they timidly hide from it themselves. They are reflective of Paul's words in 1 Timothy -

"O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane *and* idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— ²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

Grace *be* with you. Amen." 1 Timothy 6:20, 21

⁶ the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you;

Ha'arnebeth, or the hare, which is referred to here, is now believed to be extinct. Like the rock hyrax, this animal doesn't not actually chew the cud. It is supposed that *arnebeth* comes from *arah*, "to crop" and "nib" the produce of the ground. Thus they are destroyers of crops, something hares are notorious for. Paul describes such a person pictured by them in Philippians 3 -

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things." Philippians 3:18, 19

⁷ and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you.

Oh the pig! We eventually had to get to the bacon maker, and here we are. The pet made of pork, the hog made of ham, the most maligned, and yet

cutest, animal in the middle east – the sweet little swine. Despite being so notorious from a kosher perspective, *ha'khazir*, or “the swine,” is only mentioned seven times in the Old Testament. The word comes from a root meaning “to enclose” as if penned up.

It divides the hoof, but it does not chew the cud. He is a person who knows the word and divides it properly, but who doesn't meditate on it and dwell on it. He is the scholar who pours over ancient manuscripts; he is the professor who teems with sound doctrine; he is the preacher in the pulpit who gives the finest of sermons... but such are often unwilling to apply that knowledge to themselves.

They have been enclosed in a world of head knowledge, but have excluded heart knowledge. Paul describes them in 2 Timothy 3 as first, “having a form of godliness but denying its power,” (vs 5) and then “... always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (vs 7).

⁸Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They *are* unclean to you.

This verse has a two-fold idea behind it. The first half signifies not slaying such an animal for food, and the second is that of touching something that has died of itself in one of these categories. Both of such actions were to be considered disgusting acts. For the believer, we should apply this to ourselves in the sense that we should stay far away from anyone who is represented by these most undesirable of traits.

A second reason for including this verse is found in the words, “to you.” It shows that they are *not* unclean in and of themselves, but only to Israel under the law. When the law was annulled in Christ, the wall of partition

was taken away. These dietary restrictions went away with the law.

What's for dinner ma? I'm hungry and my tummy is achin'

What's for dinner ma? I can't wait till we eat

Will we have some burgers topped with cheese and bacon?

I can't wait to taste the nummy-delicious treat

No sonny boy, you can't have that as you know

I don't care if that is for what your tummy is achin'

We're legalists in this house. It is true and that is so

Here we don't eat anything topped with bacon

We are working our way to heaven despite the work of Jesus

We're on our way; this is the path we've taken

I'm sure God will look with super favor on us

When we eat our burgers without any bacon...

II. Clean and Unclean Water Life (verses 9-12)

⁹ 'These you may eat of all that *are* in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat.

Of the things in the waters that are acceptable, they must include *senappir* and *qasqeseth*, or fins and scales. The fins will only be seen in the books of Moses, and only in regard to fish. The word for scales is seen elsewhere to include describing scale-armor such as that worn by the Philistine champion Goliath.

Unlike the beasts of verses 2-8, only the positives of sea life are given. Any non-compliant animals are left unnamed. As there is plenty of nummy sea life abounding in the ocean which doesn't meet these qualifications, and as the prohibitions are only for the time during the Law of Moses – not before or after – then we are being asked to determine what fins and scales must represent.

Fins are used to keep a fish swimming properly in moving forward, turning, staying upright, and stopping. They guide the fish smoothly and efficiently through the water. Scales are predominantly used for protection, among other things. The symbolism is perfectly obvious. Like fins, the word of God is intended to keep us moving properly and in an upright manner – ever towards Christ, not racing ahead of ourselves and going beyond what is written. It is to be the rule and guide of our walk. And like scales, it is intended to protect us from harm.

As there are many scales, and as they vary in size, they are indicative of satisfactory good works which the Bible exhorts us to apply to our lives in order to be well-rounded and fully protected from that which would otherwise bring us harm.

¹⁰ But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which *is* in the water, they *are* an abomination to you.

Simply stated here, anything not authorized in verse 9 is forbidden. It is to be considered detestable to the Israelite. The term *nepshesh ha'khayah*, or "soul the living," is used as an all-inclusive phrase. Of course, this means more lobster for everyone else. In picture, we are to shun anything which rejects Scripture as the rule and guide of our faith, or attempt to cover ourselves in any works which are not of God. Our works are those which

stem *from* salvation, not *for* it. Anything not matching this is to be rejected...

¹¹ They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination.

Again, the words, “to you” show that such things are not unclean in and of themselves, but only to Israel under the law. With the annulment of the law in Christ, the wall of partition was broken down and the dietary restrictions went away with it.

¹² Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that *shall* be an abomination to you.

The positive statement was made in verse 9 concerning what can be eaten. Now for the third time in three verses, the negative statement is made. Eating anything which does not have fins and scales is absolutely forbidden.

Honey, I went down to the beach and caught us some fish

And while I was down there, I got some lobster too

There's plenty here, more than I could wish

Where should I put them, and what else can I do?

Ack! Lobster! What are you nuts my dear?

That isn't clean according to the Law of Moses

We're working our way to heaven, but we won't make it I fear

If you bring home stuff like lobster. We'll get an F minus

*If we go eating the wrong stuff, things just won't go well
It would be no different than if we were a couple of mobsters
The last thing we need is to be cast into hell
Because we sat down to a nummy meal of buttered-up lobsters*

III. Unclean Birds (verses 13-19)

¹³ 'And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they *are* an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard,

Now we come to the category of *oph* or "birds." But unlike the previous two categories, this starts with the prohibited ones first. In all, 20 types of birds, along with the bat are named. The bat being thrown in because it is a type of flying animal, something the word *oph* indicates. The majority of these are those which eat other animals or even carrion.

It should be noted that the identification of many of these birds is highly debated. Like the stones of the high-priest's breastplate, the true identification is often mere conjecture. But, it is the *root* of the names which gives us the information that we need to determine why each type is specified.

The first mentioned is the *nesher* or "eagle." The word is derived from a root which means "to lacerate," something eagles are well known for. Paul explains in Romans and Galatians that circumcision of the body, but not the true circumcision in the heart means nothing. Instead, such people are to be cut off. Pictured by the *nesher*, or eagle.

The *peres* or “vulture,” comes from the same word *paras*, or “divide” used in verse 3 concerning the splitting of the hooves. It gives the sense of the bird who is the breaker, or cleaver – breaking the bones of its prey to obtain the marrow. This bird pictures the person who would divide the fellowship in order to gain from that division. It is what Paul warns against in 1 Corinthians 1.

The third bird is the *ozniyah*, or “the buzzard.” This word is derived from the word *oz*, meaning strength, or might. Paul says that the strength of sin is the law. Elsewhere he says that the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness. This buzzard is typical of the person who relies on his own strength and merit from the law instead of in the grace of Christ.

¹⁴ the kite, and the falcon after its kind;

Ha'daah, or “the kite,” is a bird named for its swift, majestic gliding. It pauses as if suspended in the air looking for prey. It then engages in rapid flight where it darts swiftly through the air and swoops down on its prey. This bird would picture the person who carefully watches for those he can devour, and then quickly swoops in on them before they suspect anything. It is reflective of the type of person who believers are to be especially watchful for, lest they be consumed by them.

ha'ayyah, or “the falcon,” is derived from the word *iy*, or woe. It is a shrieking expression like “Alas.” Along with the specific bird, it says “after its kind.” It is thus any type of falcon within the species. Such a bird pictures a person who only brings misery and woe to those around him. Some falcons have been considered a delicacy in the surrounding areas of the Middle East, but they were warned against for Israel. Watch out for those who cause woe!

¹⁵ every raven after its kind,

The *orev*, or raven, along with all its kind, was forbidden for Israel to eat. The name comes from the verb *arav* which means to darken, as in the evening. That in turn comes from *erev*, or evening. Paul uses the term “darken” three times in his writings, each signifying a spiritual pall which comes over a person because of their futile walk in this world. He warns against this and all “after his kind.” Instead we are to be renewed in our spirits and minds.

¹⁶ the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind;

Verse 16 introduces four more birds, beginning with *bat ha'yaanah*, translated here as “the ostrich.” However, the words mean “daughter (of) the vociferation” because of the clamorous noise they make. This is obviously a picture of those who are boastful and who want to draw attention to themselves, hoping everyone will hear them. Such are described in Romans 1. As are those of the next category...

The *takhmas* or “short eared owl,” comes from the word *khamas*, which indicates treating violently, being violent, and the like. Romans 1 gives a long list of the perverse people in this world, among whom are the backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, etc.

The third category in this verse is *ha'shakhaph*, or “the sea gull.” This comes from an unused root meaning “to peel,” and thus emaciate. This bird pictures those who are caught up in asceticism. Paul speaks of such people in Colossians 2 who command others to not eat certain foods, and he also mentions them in 1 Timothy 4 where he notes those who command others

“to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth” (vs. 3).

The final bird of this verse is *ha'nets*, or “the hawk.” This comes from a word which means “to sparkle” or “glare.” Thus it signifies a bird which has swift, flashing speed. Paul, citing Isaiah, speaks in Romans 3 of those who are swift to shed blood. These are symbolically warned against all the way back here in Leviticus. And it notes of them, “after their kind.” All who have a like attitude as this are to be noted and kept away from.

¹⁷ the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl;

The first of the three in this verse is *ha'kos*, or “the little owl.” The identification of this bird is widely debated, but the word *cos* is the Hebrew word for “cup.” Some say it is an owl that looks like a cup when sitting, some say it is because of its cup like eyes, some say it is instead a pelican because of its cup like bill. What matters is not the bird, but what it pictures. *Cos* comes from *kis* which is a bag for money, like a purse. It is a person who is greedy to be filled with money. Paul warns against such an attitude several times, such as in 1 Timothy 6 –

“For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:10

Next is *ha'shalak*, or “the fisher owl.” The name comes from a root meaning “to cast down,” and so it is a bird which comes down upon its prey, diving into the water to draw it out. As the word is equated with water, this is a person who attacks those who are immersed in the word in an attempt to pull them out of it, destroying their faith. Paul speaks of exactly such –

And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, ¹⁸ who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹ Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” 2 Timothy 2:17-19

The third in this verse is *ha’yanshuph*, or “the screech owl.” This comes from *nesheph* meaning twilight or dawning, but it is from *nashaph* which means “to blow.” The reason is that the winds begin to move and prevail in the evening. Thus, this bird pictures those who are unsound in their doctrine. Paul says of them –

“...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting...” Ephesians 4:14

What is quite clear here is that, knowingly or unknowingly, the writers of the New Testament described people which perfectly fit each category of bird and beast we are looking at. This is true with the next verse as well...

¹⁸ the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture;

Ha’tinshemeth, or “the white owl,” is next. This comes from a root which means to pant, as in a hard breather, and hence to blow away or destroy. Paul speaks numerous times of those who would come in to destroy the faith of others, and certainly such people do it with such zeal that they pant heavily as they carry out their work.

Next is *ha’qaath*, or the jackdaw. This is from *qo*, or vomit. Peter speaks of

those who return to their vomit like dogs because they return to the pollution from which they had come, becoming entangled in it once again. This is the symbolism of such a bird.

The third is *ha'rakham*, or "the carrion vulture." This bird is very affectionate towards its young, hence the name *rakham* which is derived from mercy or to be compassionate. The amazing parallel of this to the New Testament is Paul's citing of the Lord from Exodus in the book of Romans where he uses the same word –

"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." Exodus 33:19

He then goes on to cite Hosea, saying –

"I will call them My people, who were not My people,
And her beloved, who was not beloved."

²⁶ "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,
'You *are* not My people,'
There they shall be called sons of the living God." Romans 9:25

The very people who were not God's people are those who were given compassion. And the people who were given the warning to not eat this type of bird, signifying compassion, were to be denied it. It is a sad type of irony found in His word. Stay away from Judaizers; those who would reinsert the law, including dietary law.

¹⁹ **the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.**

These are the last three birds of the list. The first is *ha'khasidah*, or "the

stork.” This comes from the word *khasid*, or godly one. However, being an adjective, it can be applied to an ungodly person when spoken in the negative, such as in Psalm 43:1. Obviously, such as this are described in the New Testament –

“...knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,” 1 Timothy 1:9

Next is *ha’anaphah* or “the heron.” This comes from a root meaning, “to be angry” or “enraged” because of its irritable disposition. It is an attribute which Paul warns against in both Ephesians 4:31 and Colossians 3:8.

And the final bird of the list is *ha’dukiphath*, or the hoopoe. The name is so obscure that there is little agreement on what it is derived from. What is most probable is that it comes from *duk*, meaning “to beat.” Thus, it is a picture of a brawler, something also warned against by Paul in Ephesians 4:31.

After the birds, the final living flyer to be mentioned is *ha’atalleph*, or the bat. This comes from the word *alaph*, signifying darkness. It is creatures which live for the night. Paul shows us what the bat then symbolizes –

“You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.” 1 Thessalonians 5:5-7

*I went out huntin' my dear and I shot us up a bird
Can't wait till we sit down and eat this baby up
I shot it just down the road, maybe the gun you heard
And then I set Rover after it. He's an awful good pup
Honeeeey... We can't eat this thing. It's a raven, don't you know?
Those are forbidden under the law, now toss it out the door
But my dear Christ is the end of the law; it was annulled long ago
And it ain't coming back, no never evermore
We are free in Christ from the bondage of the law
And so tonight we're having bacon, lobster and raven
We need to stand fast on Christ alone and not withdraw
And in Him we can eat whatever our tummy's are a'cravin'*

IV. Unclean and Clean Creeping Things (verses 20-23)

²⁰ 'All flying insects that creep on *all* fours *shall be* an abomination to you.

The final four verses of today deal with creeping things. The word translated as “creep” simply means, “to go,” but it is correctly translated as “creep.” In particular here are insects that creep on all fours. This however doesn't refer to the exact number of feet, but rather it is a metaphor which denotes an insect that walks with its body in a horizontal position, or near the ground in contradistinction to two-legged birds of the previous verses.

Creeping things were to be rejected for several obvious reasons, especially because of how filthy they are, but again, in picture, they represent the

really low and filthy breed of humans Paul warns against -

“For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,” 2 Timothy 3:6

²¹ Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on *all* fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth.

There was, however, a class of creeping insect that was acceptable to be eaten. They are specifically identified as those with jointed legs above their feet, by which they can leap. The word “leap” here is a new one, *nathar*. It will be used just eight times, and it gives the sense of leaping, or letting loose. In the Psalms, it is used when speaking of setting prisoners free, and in Isaiah it speaks of undoing the bands of a yoke in order to let the oppressed go free. Their jointed legs were capable of making them leap about freely. One can see the grace of Christ all over the intent of this word.

²² These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind.

The *arbeh*, or locust is first mentioned. This comes from *ravah*, to bring in abundance or multiply. The next are *ha’saleam*, or “the destroying locusts.” This comes from *sela*, or rock. The name gives the sense of crushing, as with a rock, and thus it is a destructive eater. This is the only time it is seen in the Bible.

After this is *ha’khargol*, or “the cricket.” It comes from a root which means to be afraid, and thus it means to leap suddenly, as one would when afraid.

Like the previous insect this is the only time it is mentioned in the Bible.

And finally is the *khagav* or “grasshopper.” This insect is seen just five times in the Bible. It is believed that it is named from an Arabic word which means “to veil,” because when they fly, it is often in swarms so large that they block out the sun.

The reason for allowing these four types of insects to be eaten is based on the word *nathar*, or “leap,” from the previous verse. It forms a picture of multitudes being set free from bondage, and thus it pictures the work of Christ, freeing us from the law’s bondage.

²³ But all *other* flying insects which have four feet *shall* be an abomination to you.

Apart from those insects specifically authorized by name, no other such flying insect which had four legs was to be eaten. It was to be considered as detestable to the people of Israel. It should be noted that the eating of locusts is actually mentioned in the New Testament, in Matthew –

“Now John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.” Matthew 4:3

There we see John wearing a garment made from an animal unclean to eat – a camel; bound with belt from a clean animal; and eating locusts and wild honey. Locusts are an acceptable food from an otherwise unacceptable category of creatures, and honey is an acceptable food which is derived from an unacceptable creature.

In this almost confusing display of what is acceptable under the law, John was the herald of Christ, proclaiming that His kingdom was at hand and the time had come when the multitudes would be set free from bondage. Things which were once considered defiled would be purified by Christ, and those people who thought they were pure would be shown as defiled.

There is an amazing flow of thought in these 23 verses concerning what is clean and what is unclean under the law, and what these things actually picture in regards to the New Testament. The root meaning of each of these words has, in fact, formed one spiritual picture after another of what it means to be in Christ, the One who embodies this law which Israel lived under.

Each word and each detail has been given by God to reveal Him, His work, or His expectations for those in Him. And in Him is the fulfillment of what has been presented. It will continue to be presented throughout all of the law and the prophets. In looking for Him, there He will be found. In the end, it is all about Him.

I would ask you today that if you have never called on Jesus to save you, or if you are still trying to put yourself under the constraints of this fulfilled law, you should make the call to Him, be saved by Him, and leave behind works which can not get you one step closer to God. If you don't eat certain foods because you don't like them, that is fine, but if you don't eat certain foods because the Law of Moses forbids it, you have fallen from grace, and you are not pleasing to God. Call on Christ, trust in Christ alone, and rest in Christ. In this you will be completely and perfectly pleasing to Him.

Closing Verse: "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

Next Week: Leviticus 11:24-47 *Nummy treats for me and you...* (Dietary Laws, Part II) (17th Leviticus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if you have a lifetime of sin heaped up behind you, He can wash it away and purify you completely and wholly. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

What's for Dinner?

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them

“Speak to the children of Israel, saying without a haw or a hem

‘These are the animals which you may eat

Among all the animals that are on the earth, those tasty and sweet

Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof

Having cloven hooves and chewing the cud

—That you may eat

And if you wish, you can add in a tasty spud

Nevertheless these you shall not eat

Among those that chew the cud

Or those that have cloven hooves

Not even with sauce; each is to be to you a dud

The camel, because it chews the cud

But does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you

The rock hyrax, because it chews the cud
But does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you too
The hare, because it chews the cud
But does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you
And the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves
Yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you
-----No bacon for you; boo hoo!

Their flesh you shall not eat
And their carcasses you shall not touch
They are unclean to you
No rabbit stew, or pork chops, or such
'These you may eat of all that are in the water
Whatever in the water has fins and scales
Whether in the seas or in the rivers
—That you may eat; this does not include snails

But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales
All that move in the water, you must bid adieu
Or any living thing which is in the water
They are an abomination to you
They shall be an abomination to you
Yes, to the whole nation
You shall not eat their flesh

But you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination

Whatever in the water

Which does not have fins or scales

That shall be an abomination to you

This includes lobsters, clams, and whales

'And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds

They shall not be eaten, they are an abomination, as I have outlined

The eagle, the vulture, the buzzard

The kite, and the falcon after its kind

Every raven after its kind, the ostrich, the short-eared owl

The sea gull, and the hawk after its kind

The little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl

The white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture, as defined

The stork, the heron after its kind

The hoopoe, and the bat, please bear in mind

'All flying insects that creep on all fours

Shall be an abomination to you

Yet these you may eat of every flying insect

That creeps on all fours, will be OK in some stew

Yes, those which have jointed legs above their feet

With which to leap on the earth

Those with some sauce, can be tasty and sweet
These you may eat: the locust after its kind
The destroying locust after its kind too
The cricket after its kind
And the grasshopper after its kind, these are ok for you

But all other flying insects which have four feet
Shall be an abomination to you
They shall not be for you a tasty treat

Lord God, thank you for having done what we could not do
You fulfilled the law, and now it is done for us
It is over, annulled, and through
Thank You O God, for the work of our Lord Jesus

And so through Him to You we give all of our praise
And we thank You for our freedoms in Christ, our matchless King
We shall rest in Him and His finished work for all of our days
And to You O God, we shall lift our voices and sing

Hallelujah and Amen...